

**Claims:**

1. A method of managing a plurality of user accounts assigned to a computer entity, said method comprising the steps of:

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determining an overall predicted future utilization of functionality of said computer entity which will be required to support said plurality of user accounts;

10 comparing said predicted utilization of functionality with a currently available amount of unused functionality of said computer entity; and

allowing or disallowing addition of a new user account onto said computer entity, depending upon a result of said comparison.

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2. The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of:

for each user account, generating a predicted usage of functionality provided by said computer entity over a pre-determined look ahead period.

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3. The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of:

25 for each user account, generating a predicted usage of functionality provided by said computer entity to said user account over a pre-determined look ahead period by applying a trend prediction algorithm to a historical data describing an actual historical utilization of said functionality by said user account.

4. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of determining an overall predicted future utilization of functionality comprises:

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for each user account:

determining a time period in which said user account has been installed on said computer entity;

depending upon the value of said time period since installation, selecting a  
5 prediction algorithm from a set of prediction algorithms for estimating a predicted future utilization requirement of said user account.

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5. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of determining an overall future utilization comprises:

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predicting a future utilization of at least one said user account by applying a pre-determined percentage rate of increase to a current utilization of said user account.

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6. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of determining an overall future utilization comprises for at least one said user account:

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determining a future utilization of said user account by estimating said future utilization at a same value as said current utilization of functionality provided by said computer entity to said user account.

7. A computer entity comprising:

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at least one data processor;

at least one data storage device;

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a capacity management component for managing data storage capacity of said data storage device, said capacity management component comprising:

a prediction component for predicting future utilization of data storage capacity for a plurality of user accounts;

a compare component for comparing a predicted future utilization of said plurality of user accounts with a data storage capacity currently available for use on said data storage device; and

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a control component operating to activate said prediction component and compare component.

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8. The computer entity as claimed in claim 7, wherein said control  
10 component operates to activate said prediction component and said compare component in response to a request to enter a new user account on said computer entity.

9. The computer entity as claimed in claim 7, wherein said control  
15 component operates to activate said prediction component and said compare component at a timed interval.

10. computer entity as claimed in claim 7, further comprising:  
  
20 an alert generation component for generating a warning alert message when a predicted utilization of said data storage capacity approaches a currently available unused data storage capacity.

11. The computer entity as claimed in claim 7, further comprising:  
25 a capacity limit modification component for allowing an administrator to modify a capacity warning limit.

12. A method of operating a computer entity comprising at least one  
30 data processor, and a data storage device for automatically admitting or rejecting a new user account onto said computer entity, said method comprising the steps of:

in response to a request to add a new user account to said computer entity,

(i) generating a prediction of future utilization of data storage capacity required by said requested new user account, for a pre-determined look ahead  
5 period;

(ii) for each of a plurality of user accounts currently installed on said computer entity, determining a predicted future utilization of capacity by said user  
10 account;

(iii) from said result of steps (i) and (ii), determining an overall predicted future utilization of said functionality of said computer entity over said pre-determined look ahead period;

(iv) determining a currently available unutilized functionality of said  
15 computer entity, unused by any of said current user accounts;

(v) comparing said currently unused functionality with said predicted future utilization of functionality, and  
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(vi) depending upon a result of said comparison, allowing or disallowing entry of said new user account onto said computer entity.

13. The method as claimed in claim 12, further comprising the step of:  
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(vii) if, as a result of said comparison step, said predicted future utilization of functionality is within a pre-determined percentage of said currently available unused functionality, generating an alert signal.

14. The method as claimed in claim 12, further comprising the process  
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allowing modification of a level of comparison at which said alert message is  
5 triggered.